12.

A SERMON PREACH'D ON THE LATE DAY OF Thankſgiving.

Decemb. 2. 1697.

By *JOHN HOWE*,
Miniſter of the GOSPEL.

To which is Prefix'd, Dr. *BATES*'s Congratulatory Speech to the *KING*, Novemb. 22. 1697. In the Name of the *Diſſenting Miniſters* in and about *London*.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Haverſham.

I *Offer this Diſcourſe,* My Honoured Lord, *to Your Peruſal, in Confidence that the Subject and Deſign of it will be ſo far Grateful to* Your Lordſhip, *as in ſome Degree to Atone for the Imperfections of the Management.*

I Believe it will not Offend againſt Your Lordſhips *very Accurate Judgment of Things, that I have not been ſo ſway'd by an Authority, which hath ſignifi'd much in our Age; as to repreſent the* Natural State *of Man, as a* State of War, *which either muſt ſignifie Man in his Original Conſtitution, to have been a very ill-natur'd Creature, or muſt ſignifie his Nature to be leſs Ancient than Himſelf.*

FOR I cannot Doubt, but the Author of that Maxim, would have Diſdain'd their Way of Speaking, who by Nature *Mean* Vice. *Or to have been Guilty*

Guilty of ſo Pious a Thought, that God at firſt made Man any better Thing than we find Him.

I Shall the leſs paſſionately Lament my Infelicity in loſing the good Opinion of Men of that Sentiment, if I ſtand Right in Your Lordſhips. *Not knowing any of your Rank and Figure, in the World, with whom I Count it a greater Honour to Agree in Judgment, or do leſs Fear to Diſagree.*

IN Matters of Secular Concernment, it becomes Me not to Profeſs any Judgment at all, beſides the Publick, unto which in Things of that Nature, every Private Mans ought to be, and is profeſſedly Reſigned.

YET within that Compaſs, notwithſtanding the Juſt Eſteem Your Lordſhip *hath of the Noble Endowments, which do then Illuſtriouſly Shine in the Military Profeſſion, when there is a Neceſſity of their being red. c'd to Practice: I Apprehend that otherwiſe* Your Lordſhip *hath no more grateful Thoughts of* War, *than I, nor more ungrateful of the Neceſſary Means of Preſerving* Peace. *That which is the Reproach of Humane Nature could never Originally belong to it. Nor can any thing more expoſe its Ignominious Depravation, than it ſhould ever be Neceſſary the Sword ſhould Diſpute* Right, *and the Longeſt, Decide it.*

IN the Matters of Religion which is every Mans Buſineſs, and whoſe Sphere as it is Higher, muſt be

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proportionably Wider and more Comprehenſive; I Hope it is Your Lordſhips *conſtant Care to add unto* Clearneſs and Rectitude of *Thought, the* Pleaſantneſs *of Taſte; and that you apprehend it to conſiſt not more in a Scheme of Notions, than of Vital Principles; and that your Love to it proceeds from hence, that you Reliſh it and Feel you Live by it; You are hereby Fortified againſt the Reproach that attends it, from their Contempt of it who are every Day aſſaulting Heaven, and would have the War not ended, but only transfer'd thither-ward.*

THAT which though ſome Vent, and others admire as Wit, even Paganiſm *it ſelf has Condemn'd as Fooliſhneſs.* Your Lordſhip *is in no more Danger to be alter'd hereby from your choſen Courſe, than a Man in his Health and Senſes, by Satyrs againſt Eating and Drinking.*

I Reckon Your Lordſhip *is ſo much taken up with the great Things of Religion, as to be leſs taken with the Adventitious Things Men have Thought fit to affix to it. I do not more Emulate* Your Lordſhip *in any Thing, than a Diſdain of Bigotry; nor more Honour any thing I Diſcern in You than True Catholiciſm.*

AND Recounting what Things and Perſons do truly belong to a Church, I Believe Your Lordſhip *is not profeſſedly of a Larger Church, as Counting it too Large for You but too narrow, and that You af-*

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ſect not to be of a Self-diſtinguiſht Party. Nor, beſides the Opportunity of avowing the Juſt Honour, and Obligations I have to Your Lordſhip, *and* Your Noble Conſort, *with my Sincere Concern for Your Hopeful and Numerous Off-ſpring, did any Thing more Invite this Addreſs to* Your Lordſhip, *than the agreeableneſs of ſuch Your Sentiments to the Mind and Spirit of*

My moſt Honoured Lord,

Your Lordſhips

Moſt Juſtly Devoted, and

Moſt Faithful, Humble Servant,

John Howe.

Dr. BATES's *Congratulatory Speech to the* KING, *Novemb.* 22. 1697. *In the Name of the* Diſſenting Miniſters *in and about* London.

May it Pleaſe Your MAJESTY!

YOUR Happy Return with *PEACE* in your Retinue, has rais'd a Spring-Tide of Joy, that overflows the Nation. This great Bleſſing, We Primarily owe with our moſt Solemn and Dutiful Thankfulneſs to the GOD of *PEACE*, who has Calm'd the Tempeſtuous World, and Chang'd the black Scene of Horror, and Miſery; wherein the moſt Tragical Cruelties were Acted, Cities were Fir'd, and the Fires quench'd in the Blood of the Citizens, wherein Death and Deſpair appear'd in their Terrible Shapes: And has introduc'd a Bright Scene of Proſperity, wherein Innocence and Liberty, Commerce and Abundance are ſecur'd. *This* we Owe, as to the Secondary Cauſe, with our moſt Humble Gratitude to Your MAJESTY; Your open and generous Oppoſition in the Field of Battle, has Tam'd our Potent Enemies; who preſum'd to Level all Obſtacles to their Lofty Deſigns, as if their Power had been Equal to their Pleaſure. They had broke through the Circles of Juſtice and Honour, but Your MAJESTY has fix'd ſuch Bounds, as may prevent their Swelling Exorbitancies for the Future.

EUROPE, has ſeen with Admiration Your Courage and Heroick Heat guided by an Equal Light, and Superior to all Dangers in War: There is a Juſt Expectation that an Equal Honour will attend Your MAJESTY, for Your Ruling Wiſdom, Your Juſtice Temper'd with Equity and Goodneſs in the Counſels and Arts

Arts of *PEACE*: You are the Glory of Your Subjects Abroad, and their Delight at Home. Your Influxive Preſence is the Vital Breath the Kingdom Draws, the Vital Band that Unites its Parts, and prevents their Breaking into Confuſion.

YOUR MAJESTY is Ordain'd for Victories. There are more Noble Conqueſts to be obtain'd over worſe than Foreign Enemies: Prophaneneſs in Manners, and Pernicious Doctrines in Religion that Fight againſt the Soul, and notwithſtanding our *PEACE* on Earth, Expoſe us to a Fearful War with Heaven. WE Live in an Age of Degenerate Wickedneſs: Wherein are Numberleſs Numbers of reſolv'd Looſneſs, who by their bold Impieties, defie the Supream MAJESTY of Heaven: Theſe WE Hope by Your Authority and Influence, may be Reſtrain'd, if not truly Reform'd; for whereas other Princes aſſume an Infamous Prerogative to Live as they Liſt, to ſatisfie their Vicious Appetites without Controul; Your MAJESTY Exhibites ſuch Excellent Vertues in Your Practiſe, as may be a Perſuaſive Pattern, and Commandingly Exemplary to Your Subjects.

AND whereas, there are ſuch Doctrines frequently Publiſh'd, as are Infinitely Injurious to the Perſon and Office of our Bleſſed Saviour; WE Hope Your Pious Zeal for his Divine Honour, will put a ſtop to the Licentiouſneſs of the Preſs, that the Contagion of the Dead, may not Corrupt the Living. *This* will be a moſt pleaſing Sacrifice of Praiſe to the Bleſſed GOD, who has Preſerv'd Your moſt Precious Life in Raging War, and from more Imminent Dangers, by the Dark and Cruel Conſpiracy of Wicked Enemies.

WE Humbly Renew the Aſſurances of our inviolable Loyalty, and our Continual Prayers, That GOD would Preſerve Your Sacred Perſon, and make Your MAJESTY always Happy in Your Government, and Your Subjects Happy in their Obedience.

PSAL.

PSALM XXIX. the *latter part* of the *Laſt Verſe.*

The Lord will Bleſs his People with Peace. The Whole Verſe is, *The Lord will give Strength to his People.*

The Lord will Bleſs his People with Peace.

YOU ſo generally know the Occaſion of this our Solemn Aſſembly, at this Time; that none can be in Doubt concerning the ſuitableneſs of this Portion of Scripture for our Preſent Conſideration.

OUR Buſineſs is to celebrate the Divine Goodneſs, in Preſerving our King Abroad, and Reſtoring him Home in Safety, after he had been the Happy Inſtrument of bringing about that Peace, which puts a Period to a long Continued, Waſting, and Dubious War, under which We, and all *Europe* have groaned theſe Divers Years. And if we find the favourable Workings of Providence to concur and fall in with a Divine Word, pointing them to GOD'S own People; as this for Inſtance, *The Lord will Bleſs his People with Peace:* i e. He will vouchſafe this Bleſſing to his own People in the fitteſt Seaſon, as it muſt be underſtood; this adds ſo much the more grateful and pleaſant Reliſh, to the Mercy we are this Day to acknowledge. It cannot but

do ſo with Right Minds, unto which nothing is more agreeable, than to deſire and covet ſuch Favour as GOD ſhews to his *own People*, and to be made *glad with his Inheritance*, Pſalm 105. 4, 5. from an Apprehenſion, that there muſt be ſomewhat very peculiar in ſuch Mercy as GOD vouchſafes to his own, to a People Peculiar and Select, ſevered and ſet apart for himſelf, from the reſt of Men.

'TIS true indeed, that *Peace*, abſtractly conſidered, is neither the *appropriate*, nor the *conſtant* Priviledge of ſuch a People; they neither *alone* enjoy it, nor *at all Times*, when it is brought about, even *for them*, they have other Partakers: But yet, ſuch Favours of Providence as are of larger extent, and reach to many beſides GODS own People, have a more peculiar benign Aſpect upon them, and are attended, with reference to *them*, with ſuch Conſequences, as wherein others, without being made of this People of his, are not Sharers with them. Some Intimation there is of this in this *Pſalm*, which the *Title* ſpeaks, *a Pſalm of David*, and which ſome think to refer unto the Wars managed by him in his Time with the *Moabites*, ſignified by the Wilderneſs of *Cadeſh*, and the *Syrians*, ſignified by the Cedars of *Lebanon*, of whom he ſpeaks in the Prophetick Stile, as if, by the terrible and amazing appearances of GOD's Power againſt them, they were Thunder-ſtruck, like the Trees of a Forreſt, or as the Hinds that are wont to inhabit amongſt them. And ſo it is concluded, and ſhut up with this *Epiphonema* in the End of the *Pſalm*. *The Lord will give Strength to his People, the Lord will Bleſs his People with Peace:* i. e. He is in War *their Strength*, and their *Felicity* in Peace; in War, He is the Author of all that Power, wherewith they are enabled to oppoſe and overcome Potent Enemies; And in Peace, he is their truly felicitating Good, and makes them, by his own vouchſafed Preſence, a truly bleſſed People.

IT is the latter of theſe, *Peace*, unto which the Preſent Occaſion confines us. And concerning that, we might, in the

1. PLACE, Note, from the Text, That whereſoever it is brought about, GOD is the Author of it, *GOD will Bleſs his People with Peace*. That Title which the Scripture gives him, The *GOD of Peace*, with the many Expreſſions of like Import, wherewith it abounds, can leave them in no Doubt, concerning the Divine Influence and Agency in bringing about the grateful Intervals of Peace, after deſolating Bloody Wars, who have any Reverence

Reverence for the Sacred Oracles. And indeed, to insist upon such a Subject as this, in a Case so plain, so acknowledged amongst Men that believe the Bible, were to Reproach the Auditory, as if it were made up of *Scepticks* and *Atheists*, or of them that did not believe this World was made by GOD; or that it was made by him only by some casual Stroak, and without Design, that he cared not for his reasonable intelligent Creatures when he had made them, what became of them, nor did at all concern himself, in their most considerable Concernments. I shall not therefore insist upon this, which seems rather slid in, and supposed in the Text, or taken for granted: For among a People in visible Relation and Subjection to GOD, it had been as great an incongruity industriously to assert and prove such a thing, as it would be, by an Elaborate Discourse, to prove that there is a Sun in the Firmament, unto Men that continually partake and enjoy its Light and Influences, and to whose Sense, the Vicissitudes and Distinctions of Day and Night, by its Presence and Absence, are brought under constant Notice every Four and Twenty Hours.

I shall therefore, I say, pass on to what appears more directly to be the Design of the Text. And that seems to be twofold, *First*, To represent to us in general, the great Blessing of Peace; wherein, when GOD sees it fit, he is pleased to make his own People Partakers with others. *Secondly*, Because it is not without Design, that it is said, *He will Bless his People with Peace*; unto whom 'tis plain, this *alone* is not an appropriate Priviledge, it seems further designed to intimate, and couch in, the Concurrence and Concomitancy of such things, as, superadded to Peace, will make it a compleat Blessing. *The Lord will Bless his People with Peace.* He will give them Peace, so, and upon such Terms, and with such Concomitants and Consequences, that to them it shall prove a real and a full Blessing. These two things, therefore, I intend to insist upon,

1. TO shew you how valuable a Good, and (in the Large and Common Sense) a *Blessing*, Peace is, as it stands in Opposition to Bloody and Desolating Wars. And then

2. I shall shew you, what Additions and Concomitants are necessary to make it a compleat Blessing, such as may be appropriate and peculiar to GODS own People, and so make use of the whole.

1. I ſhall ſhew you Briefly, how valuable a good Peace is in it ſelf, as it ſtands oppoſed unto Bloody and Deſtructive Wars. And this will beſt be ſeen, by ſtating and viewing it in that Oppoſition, and by repreſenting to you ſomewhat of the Horror of War; which we may do, by viewing it in its *Cauſes*, in *it ſelf*, and *in its diſmal Conſequences*, wherewith it is wont to be attended.

CONSIDER it in its *Cauſes*, and they are principally *theſe two*, the Wickedneſs of Men, and the juſt Vengeance of GOD thereupon. Theſe two concurring, and falling in together, muſt be underſtood to be the Cauſes of ſo great a Calamity among Men in this World. And I ſhall only conſider theſe two in their Complication, and not ſpeak to them diſtinctly and ſeparately.

VERY Plain it is, That War is a Mark of the *Apoſtacy*, and Stigmatizes Man as Fallen from GOD, in a Degenerate Revolted State. It is the Horrid Iſſue of Mens having forſaken GOD, and of their being Abandon'd by Him to the Fury of their own Furious Luſts and Paſſions. The Natural, and the Penal Effect of their having ſever'd themſelves, and broke looſe from the *Divine Government*. *From whence are Wars? Are they not from your Luſts?* Jam. 4. 1. GOD moſt Juſtly Puniſhes Mens Injuſtice, not by Infuſing Malignity, which he needs not, into their minds and Natures, and which it is impoſſible He can be the Author of, whoſe very *Nature* it ſelf is *Goodneſs*, and *Purity*, and *Love*; but having Forſaken Him, Rebelled againſt Him, Diſclaimed Him as their Ruler, Refuſed any longer to be Subject to Him; they are Forſaken of Him, and left to take Vengeance for it on one another; of which there cannot be a greater Inſtance, than that, when Controverſies do ariſe between Men and Men, between Nation and Nation, Kingdom and Kingdom, one People and another, it is preſently to be *Decided* by a *Bloody Sword*. This ſpeaks a Monſtrous Degeneracy in the *Intellectual World*, and from the Original Rectitude that belongs to the Nature of Men, which in his Primitive State did ſtand in a Temperament of Reaſon and Love. That there ſhould be Differences about *Meum* and *Tuum* in a Creature of that Conſtitution, is it ſelf an Horrid Thing; but then that ſuch Differences are to be Determined only by Violence, that preſently they muſt hereupon Run into War! Good GOD! What an Indication is this, That *Reaſon*, *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, and *Love* are fled from this Earth! And it ſpeaks *Rebellion* againſt GOD in

in the Higheſt Kind, 'tis a Subverſion of the moſt Fundamental Law of his Kingdom over the Intelligent World, *Thou ſhalt Love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, with all thy mind, with all thy might, and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

'TIS impoſſible there ſhould be any ſuch Thing as *War* in the World, but by the Violation of this moſt Fundamental Divine Law, the Principal and moſt Important Thing that this Government does as it were Conſiſt in over reaſonable Creatures, their Loving Him above all, and one another as themſelves. This *Law*, obſerved, muſt make this *Earth* another *Heaven:* This *Law*, Violated, and Broken, makes it another *Hell.* Man being Faln from GOD, and having loſt their Acquaintance with Him, and all Reliſh of Divine Things, think to Repair their Loſs out of this Senſible World; whereof no Man thinks he hath enough. *Deſire of more*, blinds their Eyes that they cannot Judge of Right and Wrong. Hence every Man's Cauſe is Right in his own Eyes. *Appetite* is the only *Meaſure* they Judge by. And *Power* (whatſoever of it any one can graſp) the Inſtrument by which they Execute their perverſe Judgment. A Diſmal Spectacle, and Subject of Contemplation to the Inhabitants of the Purer and more Peaceful Regions! To behold a Divine Off-Spring, the Sons of GOD, now Transform'd into Sons of the Earth, and Tearing in pieces one another, for what ſome Poſſeſs, and others Covet!

YEA, and to a Calm, Unintereſſed Spectator on our own Globe, this can be no grateful proſpect to View the Hiſtory of all Times, and Nations, and take Notice how full it is of ſuch Tragedy! *Countries* from Age to Age made *Akeldama's*, Fields of Blood, on this Account, of extending or Confining Empire and Dominion, of Invading anothers, or Defending ones own!

BUT hereupon it is not ſtrange, when a World of Intelligent Reaſonable Creatures are thus gone off from GOD, and in Rebellion againſt him, in the moſt Fundamental part of his *Government*, that He ſuffers them to be the Executioners of His Juſt Wrath upon one another.

AND if we thus look upon War, Firſt, in this *its Complicated Cauſes*, it is the *Opprobrium*, the Reproach of Humane Nature, of Intelligent Reaſonable Creatures.

BUT *Next* look upon it *In it ſelf*, and what is it, but the Deſtruction of *Humane Lives*, of *Creatures made after the Image of GOD?* Of whom He has ſo High a Value, and whoſe Lives, even for that very Reaſon, He is pleaſed to Fence and Secure by a *Se-*

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more Law, Whoever sheds Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed, for in the Image of GOD made He Man. But here is a Formed Design of *Destroying Humane Lives* by multitudes; Lives of Creatures bearing the *Image of GOD.*

AND by how much the more Necessary this is in many Cases, so much the more Grievous and Calamitous a Thing it is, that when to Cut Off and Destroy by multitudes so *Precious Things* as *Humane Lives*, is *Tragical* and *Horrid*, not to do it is so much *Worse!* Yea, That *War* it self is become an Art, and that the Valour and Skill which belong to it are Laudable Excellencies, is all Aggravation of the Sadness of this Case.

AND if we do consider the Consequences and Effects which do ensue upon such *War*, How full of Horror and Frightfulness are they! And those most of all, that are least of all thought on, and that lye most out of view: For, besides that Property is gone, and no Man knows what to call his own, Laws lose their Force, Magistrates their Authority, and Reverence, Civil Government is Disobey'd and Despised, Common Order is Violated and Turned into Confusion; Families torn in pieces, Countries laid Waste and Desolate, Towns and Cities Sack'd, Ravag'd, and made Ruinous Heaps. Besides all this, (I say) the Sacred Rites and Mysteries of Religion are Neglected and Profaned, its Holy Solemnities interrupted, Worshipping Assemblies are broken up. Men have little Opportunity left them to mind their great Concerns with GOD, and for another World; Care for Immortal Souls, when it is most Necessary, is thrown out of doors, and Reasonal Creatures, that should be employed in Adoring and Worshipping their *Great Creator*, the *GOD of their Lives*, are Employed in Designing the *Mutual Destruction* of one anothers Lives: And it may be, that is least consider'd, which carries the most of Horror in it, that multitudes are hurried down to Perdition, neither *Dread.d* by themselves, nor *Apprehended* by the Destroyer; Souls are passing in shoals into Eternity, they not considering it who are sent, nor they that send them! And what sport does this make for *Devils*, those Envious *Apostate Spirits*, that first drew Men into a like Apostacy, that when GOD had given this Earth to the Children of Men, Assigning to themselves a worse abode amidst *Infernal Darkness* and *Flames*, they should be Tearing one another in pieces about this their Portion, under the *Sun*, making *GOD*'s *Bounty* to them the Occasion of their *doing all manner of Violence to one another!* That the *Prince of the Apostacy*, the *Usurping God of this World*, should have the

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Opportunity of *Beholding Man* ſometime, by *Divine Grant* the *Lord* of it, now its ſlave, and his Captive by it! Led by him at his will, into whatſoever is moſt *Repugnant* to the Will, and the very Nature of his Maker. That whereas he was at firſt made after *GOD's own Image*, a *God-like Creature* reſembling his *Maker*, eſpecially in *Spirituality*, and *Love*, he now more reſembles in Senſuality *Beaſts*, and in malignity *Devils*, and both, by an *Inordinate Love* of this World; the *Friendſhip* whereof, and a mind *Carnalized* by it, is *Enmity againſt GOD*. (*Jam.* 4. 4. *Rom.* 8 7.) And whereof alſo, becauſe every Man thinks his own ſhare too little, he becomes any ones *Enemy*, that hath more of it than himſelf.

AND thus have *Devils* the pleaſure of *Beholding Men* by this very *Gift* and *Expreſſion* of *GOD's Love* and *Kindneſs* to them, Transformed into *Enmity*, and *Hatred* of himſelf and one another, Forſaken of Him, and Deſtroying each other, and haſtening once more into their Horrid Society; that as they were Accomplices with them in their firſt *Rebellion*, they may be *Partakers* and *Aſſociates* with them in *Woe* and *Torment*. The moſt diſmal part of the *Story*, is that which lyes moſt out of ſight.

NOW let all this be conſidered and put together, and ſurely *Peace* is a *Valuable* Thing, It ſpeaks Man in ſome degree return'd to himſelf, and in a right mind, when he can Agree and be Content to let another live Quiet and Unmoleſted by him; one Man another Man, and one Nation another Nation.

THUS far does *Peace* appear a *Bleſſing*, a-part and by it ſelf, a *Valuable Good*, and, according to the Common Notion and Eſtimate, it may be called a *Bleſſing*, wherewith GOD *Bleſſes* His People, in common with others. But we are further to conſider.

2. WHAT Things are requiſite to make this a *Real*, and a *Compleat Bleſſing*, Capable of being Appropriated unto GOD's own peculiar People. Which ſeems alſo to be Intended here, *The LORD will Bleſs His People with* Peace. In Speaking to this, I ſhall do theſe Two Things:

1. MENTION the *Requiſites* themſelves.

2. SHEW their *Requiſiteneſs*: Or, Shew what is *Requiſite* to make *External Peace*, a Real and Peculiar *Bleſſing*. And then ſhew you upon what Account the Addition and Concomittancy of ſuch Things is *Requiſite*.

1. I ſhall ſhew you the Things that are requiſite.

1. SUCH Peace as we have been hitherto ſpeaking of, is then truly a Bleſſing, when there is in Conjunction with it, a very Copious Effuſion of the Spirit of GOD. In ſuch a Concomitancy, *Peace* will make a People, a Bleſſed People. When, after ſuch a Calamitous Diſpenſation was over, and at an End, as we read of, *Ezek.* 39. wherein *ver.* 23. GOD is ſaid to hide his Face; and many of his People were carried into Captivity, and many fell by the Sword, it comes at length to this, He will no more hide his Face, or cover it with ſo ireful and gloomy Aſpects, and Appearances that it cannot be comfortably beheld. 'Tis for this very Reaſon, *Becauſe he pours forth his Spirit upon the whole Houſe of Iſrael*, as it is in *verſe* 29. of that Chapter, Pouring forth, ſignifies a Copious Communication; and if the Spirit of GOD be copiouſly communicated, the beſt of Bleſſings are in great abundance contained in it, which will infer, or countervail whatſoever is valuable or needful beſides, to make the State of ſuch a People a Bleſſed State.

2. IT will be ſo, when the Goſpel of *Peace* has its free courſe, and a large ſpread in the World. When, in Conjunction with *beating of Swords into Plow-ſhears, and Spears into Pruning-hooks, the Law goes forth of Sion, and the Word of the Lord from Jeruſalem; and Nations ſhall ſay, Come, let us go up to the Houſe of the Lord, and he will teach us his Ways, and we will walk in his Statutes*; as in that of *Micah* 4. 2, 3. And

3. WHEN, according to the Dictate of Divine Wiſdom, *Kings do Reign* (as *Prov.* 8. 15.) *and Princes decree Juſtice*; when GODS People *have Judges, as at the firſt, Counſellors as at the beginning*, Iſa. 1. 26. *able Men, Men of Truth, fearing GOD, and hating Covetouſneſs*, Exod. 18. 21. When he is pleaſed to ſet Kings on the Throne, *that ſcatter the Wicked with their Eyes*, and ſo to *eſtabliſh the Throne in Righteouſneſs*; when there is a Deſign driven, by thoſe that bear the Civil Sword, the Sword of Juſtice, to be a Terror to Evil-doers, but a Praiſe to them that do well; ſo as it may be ſaid upon this account, they are the Miniſters of GOD for good, whom he has been pleaſed to ſet in ſuch Stations.

4. WHEN GOD *gives Paſtors after his own Heart*, that are able, and do make it their buſineſs, to *feed his People with Knowledge, and Underſtanding*. When he inſpirits ſuch to cry mightily, to warn Men off from Sin, When Watchmen, ſet over his People, are faithful in the buſineſs of their Station, at once both

to

to ſave their People and Themſelves, from having their Blood required at the Hands of either. This will make a peaceful State, an happy State; it will contribute a great deal towards it. And again, when hereupon, in the

5. PLACE, Wickedneſs languiſhes, the Luſts of Men droop and wither. There is ſome viſible reſtraint, if there be not an univerſal Mortification, of ſuch Fruits of the Fleſh as thoſe that are ſpoken of *Gal.* 5. 19. *Adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, ſtrife, ſedition, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revilings*, and ſuch like, that are inconſiſtent with a ſhare in the Inheritance of the Kingdom of *GOD*, as it after follows. This does much to the making a peaceful State of Things, a Bleſſed State; it takss away much of the Occaſion of further Controverſie between *GOD* and ſuch a People. But

6. WHEN there is a very great Diffuſion of an Holy new Nature, which carries the Matter higher, and is a great Addition, though in certain Conjunction with the former; as it is when the Luſts, and Works of the Fleſh do ceaſe to be Reigning and Rampant among them, who Live under the Goſpel, through the victorious and more powerful Operation of the Spirit of Grace breathing in it. For then by the Influence of the ſame Spirit, not only ſuch vicious Inclinations are pluck't up by the Roots, as certainly withſtand a Peoples Felicity; but ſuch poſitive Principles are implanted, as tend to promote it. Yet ſince this Conjunction is not conſtant, but ſuch inſolencies of wickedneſs, as more directly tend to make a People miſerable, may be repreſt by Inferiour Cauſes: I therefore more expreſly add, that then *Peace* may be reckon'd a certain, and a full Bleſſing, when with it we behold a Divine Offſpring continually riſing up, of Men appearing to be Born of *GOD*, and to have received a *GOD* like Nature; apt to do Good, and become Bleſſings to the World. When there is a Riſing Generation of ſuch! Not proſelyted to this or that Party, but to real ſubſtantial Godlineſs and Chriſtianity. When Multitudes are thus turned unto the Lord, When there are numerous Converſions, a new Creation is ſpringing up in viſible and multiply'd inſtances, ſo as that Holineſs comes to be both an extenſive and illuſtrious thing; when *Multitude* comes to give Reputation to ſerious Religion; when it is no longer a Reproach to be a viſible Fearer of *GOD*, becauſe generally Men are ſo. When it is

look'd upon as no fashionable Thing, to be a despiser of God, and Heaven, and to breath out Contempt, of the Divine Power that gave us Breath. And

7. WHEN hereupon, the Divine Government obtains and takes place in the Minds and Consciences of Men. When his Authority is owned with Reverential Submission. Then *GOD* does Bless a People, when his Fear spreads far and near; *GOD shall bless us, and all the Ends of the Earth shall fear Him*; as in that *Psalm* 67. the latter end. And again,

8. WHEN there is a manifest Power and prevalency of Divine Love amongst Men, that bear the same Name of Christians; when that *Peace* of *GOD* Rules in their Hearts, unto which they are all called in one Body. When they observably keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of *Peace*. When they have *Peace* one towards another, so as that it may be seen that they are all the Sons of *Peace*, the Children of the same Father, who has conveyed it into them, as part of that Divine Nature, which he communicates to the Regenerate Seed, when there is a natural Propensity to one another, that they can no more Violate and Tear that vital Bond of Love and *Peace* that is among them, than they can endure to Tear their own Flesh, or pluck out their own Eyes. When *Peace* among Christians, appears to be a connatural Thing, not the product of Conveniency and prudential Considerations only; but a Nature, which none can more endure to Counter-Act, than to offer Violence to themselves; a Thing which Nature admits not, whose Laws never allow it to Act against it self. And

Lastly, WHEN, upon all this, GOD appears to be *Reconciled* unto such a People, *For in His Favour is Life*. When all these Things do concur, as so many Indications of His being at *Peace* with them, *i. e.* That He has intirely Forgiven them All Former Offences, *That their Sins and Iniquities He remembers no more*; And these concur with such Things as partly Make, and partly Argue them, the Objects of His Delight, *That He has Written His Law in their Hearts*, He has *Put His Spirit into them*, He has made them a *Company of God-like Creatures like Himself, whose very Nature is Love*; they are his Living Resemblances in that very Respect, expressing herein His *Vertues*, who has *Called them out of Darkness, into His own Glorious and Marvellous Light*. Hereupon, such a People may reckon themselves secure of GOD's own Presence, *He is in the midst of them*, and His *Glory* ceases to hover, becomes with them

them a Fixed Thing, ſettles its Station, as not about to diſcontinue or remove; their Land may now be called, *The Land of* Immanuel, and bears the Inſcription *GOD with us.* The *Tabernacle of GOD is with them*, and He is reſolved to *Dwell with* them, and be their GOD, and a-vow them before all the World for His *Peculiar People.* After the *many things* that do concur together, in an Inferiour kind, as the concomitants of a meerly External Peace as, *That their Sons grow up as Plants, their Daughters as ſo many Poliſhed corner Stones*, that join together the Walls of a Pallace, that their *Garners be full*, their *Sheep numerous, their Oxen ſtrong*, & that *there be no complaining in their Streets*; after all theſe things, it is ſubjoined, Yea, *Happy is the People whoſe GOD is the LORD.* All the forementionʼd things, alone, will never make a Bleſſing worthy of a People peculiar to GOD. But when it can be ſaid, That the LORD is their GOD, they are an Happy People indeed, *Pſalm* 144. 12. 15. Such as theſe are the Things *Requiſite* to make *Peace* a Compleat *Bleſſing.* But now we are

2. TO ſhew you the Requiſiteneſs of the Concurrence and Concomitancy of ſuch Things to the mentioned Purpoſe; or how it may appear, that ſuch Things as theſe are neceſſary to compleat this Bleſſing, or to make it a truely valuable, or a ſpecial Bleſſing. In Order hereto Note,

1. THAT there is ſuch a Thing, as a *ſpecial Bleſſing*, very diſtinguiſhable from ſuch Bleſſings as are meerly Common. We read of one *Jabez*, 1 *Chron.* 4. 9, 10. ſaid to be *more honourable than his Brethren.* And ſomewhat very remarkable (as we are to reckon, when to the Divine Wiſdom it was thought fit to be inſerted amidſt a Genealogical Diſcourſe) is further ſaid of him; *viz.* That he called to the *GOD of Iſrael*, ſaying, *O! that thou wouldſt Bleſs me indeed*, &c. And ʼtis added, *GOD granted what he Requeſted.* It ſeems, beſides what goes under the Common Notion of *Bleſſing*, he reckonʼd there was ſomewhat more Peculiar, which he calls *Bleſſing indeed.* There is a known *Hebraiſm* in that Expreſſion. What we read *Bleſs me indeed*, is, *Bleſs me in Bleſſing me*; q. d. Let me have *a Bleſſing, within a Bleſſing*; Let me have *that* Bleſſing, whereof the *other* is but a *Cortex, the outſide.* Let me have that Bleſſing, that is wrapt up and encloſed in the external Bleſſing. And becauſe ʼtis ſaid, *And GOD granted his Requeſt*, we have Reaſon to uuderſtand, it was ſomewhat very peculiar that *GOD* vouchſafed unto him: And that

account which ſome give us, has a look that way; that *GOD* vouchſafed him ſomewhat more extraordinary in the kind of Mental and Intellectual Endowments: For we are otherwiſe informed, that this *Jabez* became a noted *Doctor* among the *Jews*, and that the City, called after his Name, was thereupon afterwards the Reſidence of ſuch as were moſt Learned in their Laws, *Vatabl. apud Critic.* That is to be *Bleſſed indeed*, to have theſe Things conferr'd, that do reach the Mind, and affect the inner Man; to be bleſſed with Spiritual Bleſſings from the Heavenly Places, as in that *Eph.* 1. 3. There is a Spiritual ſort of *Bleſſing*, that may be encloſed in the External *Bleſſing*: And particularly in this of *Peace*, which while it is common to the *People of GOD*, with other Men is it ſelf not common.

2. I further Note, That the things I have mentioned to you, they are of *that ſpecial kind*, they are either immediate Spiritual Bleſſings or Subſervient to ſuch. Whereupon now we may, from ſeveral conſiderations, evince to you, that, *without them*, ſuch an External Good as *this of Peace*, is not a compleat Bleſſing:

1. IT is no Argument of *GOD*'s *Special Favour*. The Beſt and moſt Valuable Bleſſings are from the Ευδοκία θελήματος, the good pleaſure of His Will, *Eph.* 1. 3, 4, 5. Other Men may enjoy External Benefits, may both Proſper in War, and Flouriſh in Peace, as well, and often more than *GOD*'s own *People*. You Read of a Time, wherein *the whole Earth* is ſaid to be *at Reſt and Quiet*, *Iſ.* 14. 7. Therefore meer *Peace* is no mark of Special *Divine Favour*, and ſo is not Abſtractly conſidered, a Compleat Bleſſing; not a *Self-deſirable* Thing.

2. MEN are not made by it the better Men; they may enjoy *Peace*, and being Carnal-minded Men before, may ſtill continue ſo, as great Strangers to *GOD* as they were, as Vain and Senſual, as Profligate and Licentious, as Uſeleſs in the World, as Miſchievous; every way as Ill Men as ever. And

3. THEY may, by meer External *Peace*, become ſo much the worſe Men. *That* may be an Occaſion to them of their growing worſe and worſe. *The Proſperity of Fools* (i. e. of Wicked Men) *ſlays and deſtroys them*, *Prov.* 1. 32. 'Tis an Obſervation, that runs through the Courſe of Time, that as Wars at length beget an enforced Peace; ſo *Peace*, infers free Trade and Comerce, and that *Plenty*, and that, Pride and Wantonneſs; ſo theſe run us back in an Oval, but unhappy Circle to be *as we were*, in War again. And if that prove not the preſent or the ſpeedy Conſequent, *that* enſues

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which is worſe than War, unleſs *GOD* vouchſafe that other ſort of Bleſſing, which will Influence, and Better Mens minds. Vice ſprings up in the more fattened Soil. Mens Luſts will ſoon prove more Oppreſſive Tyrants than they can have freed themſelves from, by the juſteſt and moſt proſperous War, and will ſubdue them to a far Viler and more Ignoble Servitude. An ingenious Writer of thoſe Affairs, obſerves, that the former *Scipio* open'd the way to the *Roman Power*; the *Latter*, to their *Luxury*. Their *Vertue* languiſht, and they were conquered by their own Vices, who before could Conquer the World. † That Noted Moraliſt ſays, *Infirmi eſt animi, non poſſe pati divitias.* 'Tis a weak mind that cannot bear a proſperous condition: But where are there minds ſtrong enough to bear it, if they be not Bleſt from Above with ſomewhat better than that *Proſperity it ſelf.*

Vell: Paterc.

† *Sen.*

4. Men may, notwithſtanding meer External *Peace*, be as miſerable in this, and in the other World, as if they had never known it; and much more, if by it they have been the more wicked. I beſeech you conſider, Are they a *Bleſſed People?* Or, Is that a *Bleſſed Man*, between whom and Eternal Miſery there is but a breath? He may but breathe another breath, and be in the midſt of Flames; Is he Happy this moment, that may be as Miſerable as any Devil the next? Thoſe things can only be compleat Bleſſings to any, that are inſeparable ones, and that will make them for ever Bleſſed. For me to have but ſuch a Bleſſing, as does not make me Bleſſed! What an unbleſt Bleſſing is this! A *Philoſopher* can tell you, Bleſſedneſs cannot be a thing ſeparable from my ſelf; not a χωριστόν τι. *Ariſt.* It can much leſs be ſuch a thing as may leave me miſerable to all Eternity, leaſt of all, what may make me ſo, by degenerating into a Curſe, as *Mal.* 2. 2.

THEREFORE theſe are demonſtrations that *meer External Peace*, without ſuch Additions as you have heard of, can never be a *Compleat Bleſſing*, nor ſuch as can be underſtood vouchſafed to the People of *GOD*, as their Ultimate and Conſummative Felicity.

IT muſt in the mean time be acknowledg'd, that as a People may belong to *GOD*, *Externally* more than another People; and may ſome time be *Externally* more reformed than *at other times*; ſo *Peace*, with other *External Good* Things, may thereupon be afforded them, as *Leſs-expreſſive Marks* of *GOD*'s Favour, and approbation of their more Regular Courſe. And by the Tenor of *GOD*'s particular Covenant with the people of *Iſrael*, might more certainly

ly be expected ſo to be. Yet this is a State wherein it is not reaſonable or ſafe for any finally to acquieſs.

I therefore now come to the promiſed *Uſe*, which will correſpond to the two *General Heads* I have been diſcourſing of. Firſt, *To let you ſee what cauſe of Thanksgiving we have in reference to the former, the Bleſſing of Peace abſtractly conſidered.* And, Secondly, *What Cauſe of Supplication we have, in reference to the latter, the Additions that are requiſite to make it a Compleat Bleſſing.*

1. *As to the former*, Since *Peace* is ſo Valuable a Thing, conſidered a-part, as you have heard it is. This points out to us *The matter of Thanſgiving*, for which this day is appointed, That *GOD* has preſerved our KING, amidſt ſo innumerable *Dangers* abroad; That He has brought him home to us in *Safety*; That He has made him the Inſtrument of That *Peace*, that we find is at length brought about, wherein he is returned to us a *Greater Conqueror*, than if he had Routed and Deſtroyed never ſo Potent Armies of our Enemies in the Field, we have Reaſon to underſtand the matter ſo. By prevailing in War, he had only Conquered by *Force*; by prevailing for Peace, he has Conquered by *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*. By prevailing in War, he had only Conquered the Bodily Power of our Enemies, or their baſer part; by prevailing for Peace, he has Conquered their minds. By prevailing in War, he had brought about the Good only of one ſide; by prevailing for Peace, he has brought about the Real Benefit of both ſides, a far more diffuſive Bleſſing. By prevailing in War, he had Conquered Enemies; by prevailing for *Peace*, he has Conquered Enmity it ſelf. By prevailing in War, he had over-come other Men; but in prevailing for *Peace*, conſidering his Martial Spirit, and his high Provocations, he has done a far Greater Thing, he has Conquered himſelf, whom none ever Conquered before.

BESIDES what this Great Bleſſing of Peace, generally conſidered, contains in it ſelf, we ought to Amplify it to our ſelves, being brought about by ſuch means, wherein we have ſo particular a Concern. This ought to add with us a very Grateful Reliſh to it, for it is a Glory to our Nation, that *GOD* has ſet a *Prince* on the *Engliſh* Throne, that could ſignifie ſo much to the World; the Beams of that Glory, *GOD* hath caſt on him, reflect, and ſhine upon His People; to be made the *Head* among other Nations, and not the Tail; *GOD* hath in His Word Taught us, Not to count it an inconſiderable thing. And it is our more peculiar Glory, that our KING is Renowned, not by throwing *Death* and *Deſtructi-*

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on every where *round about him*; but by ſpreading the Benefits included in *Peace* through the Neighbour-Nations. And is Returned to us, leaving the reſt of *Europe* only to Lament that they all live not under his Government; I pray *GOD* he may meet with no Ungrateful Returns; and that none may be ſo ill-minded as to grudge at Power ſo lodg'd as to ſave us, who were leſs concern'd at its being lodg'd, where it could only be deſigned to deſtroy us. In the mean time, it might Excite us to the higher pitches of Thankfulneſs to Almighty *GOD*, for this Bleſſing of the *Preſent Peace*, if we did conſider,

BOTH, what it hath Coſt.

AND whereto it is Improvable.

BUT the *Former Conſideration* I ſhall not inſiſt upon, leſt any ſhould make an undue uſe of it.

AND the *Latter*, I leave to the following Head, which we are next to proceed to, *Viz.*

Secondly. TO ſhew what matter of Supplication remains to us *upon the latter Account*, that is, with Reference to ſuch things as are yet wanting to make this *Bleſſing of Peace* a *Compleat Bleſſing*, and without which it cannot be underſtood to be ſuch; but we may be left, at laſt, a moſt miſerable People; and ſo much the more miſerable, by how much the higher Favours we have to account for, that not being Improved, muſt have been thrown away upon us. The Mercies included in the Peace, will be unimproved and loſt, without the mentioned Additions. Whereof all the ſeveral Heads that were Recited belong to one, *Viz.* That of *Spiritual Bleſſing*; *That* therefore *in the General*, we have to pray for, that *GOD* may be ſaid to *Bleſs us indeed*, to *Bleſs us in Bleſſing us*, viz. *That He would Bleſs us with Spiritual Bleſſings in the Heavenlies*, (i. e. in Heavenly Things, or from the Heavenly Places) *in Chriſt Jeſus*, as *Eph.* 1. 3.

LET us I Pray you Learn to diſtinguiſh between a *Self-deſirable Good*, that *in its own Nature, is ſuch*, ſo immutably, and invariably that it can never degenerate, or ceaſe to be ſuch; And *what is only ſuch by Accident*, and in ſome Circumſtances may be much otherwiſe.

SPIRITUAL Good, that of the Mind and Spirit, and which makes that better, eſpecially that which accompanies Salvation, *Heb.* 6. 9. That runs into Eternity, and goes with us into the other World, is of the *former Sort*.

EXTERNAL

EXTERNAL Good, is but *Res Media*, capable of being *to us*, ſometimes Good, and ſometimes Evil, as the Caſe may alter. *Bleſſings of this kind* may become *Curſes*. Mal. 2. 2. *I will Curſe your Bleſſings — yea I have curſed them already* ——. A Mans *Table may become his Snare, and that which was for his welfare a Trap*, Pſalm 69. 22.

MEERLY External Bleſſings, are Curſes, when they become the fewel of Luſts, when they animate Men unto Conteſts againſt Heaven, rebellions againſt the Divine Government; when, like *Jeſurun*, Men wax Fat by them, and Kick againſt Heaven, *Deut*, 32. This we are always liable to, till Spiritual Bleſſings, intermingle with our other Bleſſings. And nothing ſhould more convince the World, that the kindeſt and moſt benign Part of the Divine Government lies in immediate Influences on the Minds of Men, and that conſequently their own Felicity depends thereon. Let all things that can be imagined, concur in the kind of *External Good!*; and they can never make him an Happy Man, that has an ill Mind: He will always be his own Hell, and carry that about with him whereſoever he goes; He will be a conſtant Spring and Fountain of Miſery to Himſelf; Miſery, and he cannot be ſeparated from one another. *There is no Peace to the Wicked, ſaith my GOD; but he will be always a troubled Sea, whoſe Waters caſt forth Mire and Dirt*, Iſa. 57. 20, 21. *The Philoſophy of Pagans* would have made them aſhamed to Place their Felicity in any Thing without, or Foreign to themſelves.

BUT we are *Chriſtians*, and ſhall we not much more be aſhamed, to take *other*, or even *oppoſite Meaſures of Bleſſedneſs*, to thoſe which are given us by our *Divine Maſter*.

TO be *Poor* in *Spirit*; upon juſt accounts *Mourners*, Meek, *Hungry and Thirſty after Righteouſneſs*, *Merciful*, *Pure in Heart*. *Peace-Makers*. To ſubmit *to be perſecuted for Righteouſneſs-ſake*. Theſe are his Characters of a Bleſſed Man. And He places that Bleſſedneſs it ſelf in Congenerous Things, *Mat.* 5. 3, 4, 5, &c.

LET us Learn from him; and Collect that nothing but Wickedneſs can make us miſerable. What an overflowing Deluge have we in View? Tending to ſubvert *our Religion*, and *our Civil* State together! Nor have we another Effectual Remedy in view, but the Spirit of GOD, if He will vouchſafe to pour it forth. *The great Enemy of Mankind is come*

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in upon us like a Flood; and only the Spirit of the Lord can lift up a Standard againſt him, Iſa. 59. 19. The Spirit of the Lord would be to us as a purifying Flame, to burn up our Filthineſs, and enkindle in us that Divine Love, that would make us *Zealous of good Works*. And this ſhould be with us the Matter of earneſt and inceſſant Supplication, not with Diffidence, for *He will give his Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke 11. 13. Nor with diminiſhing Thoughts of the Neceſſity and Value of the Gift. Take heed of that, for that were to be miſerable and undone by a Principle; To be miſled by a prophane falſe Judgment, into the Contempt of the moſt highly valuable Things, that are moſt neceſſary to our true Welfare. And which are all contained in the Gift of the Spirit, as you may ſee by comparing *Mat.* 7. and *Luke* 11. with one another. In the one Place it is ſaid, *He will give good Things to them that ask him*; in the other Place it is ſaid, *his Spirit*; implying, that the Gift of the Spirit Involves in it *all good Things*. And certainly nothing can be good to any Man, till he hath that Spirit that makes him Good: And we are greatly concerned, to Supplicate mightily for the Effuſion of that Bleſſed Spirit, for theſe two Purpoſes eſpecially. *Firſt*, That there may be a larger Diffuſion amongſt us of *Vital Religion*, whereby we ſhall be at Peace with GOD. *Secondly*, That *Chriſtian Love* may more abound, whereby Chriſtians may be compoſed to mutual Peace, and more diſpos'd to mutual Communion with one another.

1. THAT there may be a larger Diffuſion of *Vital Religion*. Wherein ſtands indeed their being at Peace with GOD, when there is a mutual amplexus between him and them, Mind touching Mind, and Spirit Spirit; when He does, by His Spirit, embrace the Spirits of Men, and infuſe Light and Life into them, and adapt and ſuit them for *his Communion*. To this Purpoſe, we have great Cauſe to beg and ſupplicate earneſtly, for a greater *pouring forth of his Spirit* that this *living Religion* may ſpread amongſt us: For we appear to be under a Doom, while it does not ſo, *that ſeeing we ſhould ſee, and not perceive, &c. Iſa.* 6. O the fearful guilt incurr'd one Lords Day after another! When great Aſſemblies meet together, Multitudes are beſought and ſupplicated, that they would be Reconciled to GOD, but too few Liſten. Peace with GOD, ſeems not a valuable Thing with us, *His Favour in which is Life*, is little ſet by. When, with many a one, a

Treaty is continued, in Order to Peace, through many Years, Seven, Ten, Twenty, Thirty, nay Forty Years; and yet this Treaty brings not about a Peace at laſt; but they ſtand out ſtill, hardened in their Impenitency, Infidelity, Obſtinacy, Enmity, againſt GOD and his Chriſt, through the Power and Dominion that an Earthly, Vain, Carnal Mind has in them, and over them. What can our Peace with Men ſignifie in this Caſe? What *do we not know, that the Friendſhip of this World is Enmity againſt God?* James 4. 4. 1 John 2. 15. And that it is as impoſſible, for a Man to be a ſincere Lover of GOD, and an over-intenſe Lover of this World, as to have *two GODS, i. e. two Supream Powers* to govern him, two *Supream Goods* to ſatisfie him. This muſt breed a perpetual War, till the Caſe alters between Thee, and Him that made Thee; and *Woe to him that ſtrives with His Maker!* To have the Wrath of GOD, Armed with Omnipotency, engaged againſt Thee; and yet that thou ſhouldeſt not covet Peace, that yet thou ſhouldſt not cry for Peace! To have the Peace-making Blood of thy Redeemer, crying to Thee, O be at Peace with GOD! To have Him that ſhed it thus beſpeaking Thee, I am ready to do the Part of a Days-man; I have dyed upon the Croſs, that I might do ſo, that I might effect and bring about a Peace between GOD and Thee. I am ready to Mediate, make Uſe of Me. I will undertake on GODS Part, that He ſhall Pardon Thee, that He ſhall Forgive Thee, and let the Controverſie fall, if yet thy Heart, on thy Part, will yeild, melt, and relent, and thou cry for Mercy. He came with this Deſign into this World, the Proclamation of Angels at His coming ſpake his Deſign, *Glory to GOD in the Higheſt, and Peace on Earth, and Good Will towards Men.* Shall not all this be believed? Or ſhall Men pretend to believe it, and not Conſider it, or not Look upon it, as a conſiderable Thing?

2. AND there is as much need too, that we ſupplicate for this Spirit, as a Spirit of mutual Love among Chriſtians, to reconcile them to one another. Which indeed is alſo but to Chriſtianize them, to make Vital Religion take Place with them. For that ſame Spirit of Chriſt, which animates his Body, and makes them his Living Members, makes them ſuch to one another. And the Matter ſpeaks it ſelf, That oppoſite Spirit unto truly Chriſtian Peace and Love which appears amongſt us, nothing but the Spirit of Chriſt can overcome; we are not to expect a Cure

of

of our Diſtempers in this Kind, but by the pouring forth of this Bleſſed Spirit: And if there be not a Cure, we are certainly to expect the pouring forth of his Wrath. And Things look with a Threatning Aſpect upon us to this Purpoſe. Now that Opportunity is ſo Inviting, GODS Call ſo Loud, and the Way ſo Plain. That yet an Indiſpoſition to Peace ſhould be ſo obſtinate, that Breaches ſhould be kept open by Trifles, and unaccountable Things, of which no Man of Senſe can pretend to give an Account. That there is Strife, too manifeſtly not from the Love of *Truth* whereof not one Hair needs be Loſt (nor of any other valuable Thing) but meerly from the Love of Strife; when as to the moſt Material and Important Truths, Men are agreed, but would *ſeem* to diſagree; they Mean the ſame Things, but impute to one another a different Meaning; and pretend to know the others Mind better than themſelves, that on that pretence they may Quarrel with them! All this looks Fatally. And *our unjuſt Angers at one another*, are too expreſſive of *GODS juſt Anger with us all*; that his Good Spirit, that Spirit of Love, Peace, Kindneſs, Benignity is ſo notoriouſly Reſiſted, Vexed, Grieved, and Deſpited by us. And the Conſequences are likely, *for ſome Time*, to be very Diſmal. Though when GOD hath proceeded in a Way of Punitive Animadverſion, ſo far as he ſhall Judge neceſſary for the Vindication of his own Name, and the Honour of our Religion ſo ſcandalouſly miſrepreſented to the World, it will be eaſie to Him, by one Victorious Effort of that Spirit to reduce the Chriſtian Church to its Original, genuine Temper; and make it ſhine again, in its own Native Light, and Luſtre. But in the Mean Time, I cannot ſee, that there is greater need of an over-pouring Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, to draw Men into Union with Chriſt, and thereby to bring back Apoſtate Souls to GOD, or to work in them *Faith* and *Repentance*, than to bring them into Union *upon Chriſtian Terms*, with one another. Or that the Love of this World, or any the moſt ignominious ſenſual Luſt, or Vice (Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, or any other) are more hardly, or more rarely overcome, than the Envy, Wrath, Malice, which Chriſtians ordinarily, are not at all ſhy of expreſſing toward one another.

I ſpeak upon ſome Experience, lamenting that having this occaſion (which Senſe of Duty will not let me balk) I have alſo ſo much Cauſe, to mention that foregoing Obſervation. For

I cannot forget, that ſometime Diſcourſing with ſome very Noted Perſons about the buſineſs of Union among Chriſtians, it hath been freely granted me, that there was not ſo much as a Principle left (among thoſe the Diſcourſe had Reference to) upon which to Diſagree. And yet the ſame fixed Averſion to Union, continued as before; as a plain Proof, they were not *Principles*, but *Ends*, we were ſtill to differ for. In this Caſe, what but the Power of an Almighty Spirit can overcome? To quote Texts of Scripture upon ſuch Occaſions, ſignifies nothing, even to thoſe who profeſs a Veneration for thoſe Holy Oracles of GOD. Let ſuch Places be mention'd, as are expreſly directed againſt Diviſion, Wrath, Strife, Slandering or Backbiting one another, and they avail no more, than if the Vice, were the Vertue, or the Vertue the Vice; no more than if it were a Command to Chriſtians, to Malign, to Traduce, to Backbite one another. To urge ſo plain and numerous Scriptures in theſe Caſes, it is to as little Purpoſe, as to oppoſe ones Breath to a Storm; It is the ſame Thing, as if all Scriptures, that had any Aſpect or Look this Way, were quite put out of the *Canon*, and all this, with Men zealous for the Divine Authority of the Scripture. And indeed it is come to that paſs as to look like a Jeſt, to expect that any Man ſhould be ſwayed by Scripture, or the moſt convincing Reaſon agreeable thereto, againſt his own Paſſion or Humour, or againſt the (ſuppoſed though never ſo groſly miſtaken) Intereſt of his Party.

NOR is it meer *Peace*, that is to be aimed at, but *free*, *mutual Chriſtian Communion* with ſuch, as do all *hold the Head*, *Chriſt*. As Peace between Nations infers Commerce, ſo among Chriſtian Churches, it ought to infer a Fellowſhip in Acts of Worſhip. I wiſh there were no Cauſe to ſay this is declined, when no Pretence is left againſt it but falſe Accuſation; none but what muſt be ſupported by Lying and Calumny: Too many are buſie at inventing of that which is no where to be found, that Exiſts not in the Nature of Things, that they may have a Colour for continued Diſtance. And is not this, to fly in the Face of the Authority under which we Live? *i. e.* The Ruling Power of the Kingdom of Chriſt, the Prince of Peace? 'Tis ſtrange they are not aſhamed to be called Chriſtians; that they do not Diſcard and Abandon the Name, that can allow themſelves in ſuch Things! And 'tis here to be Noted, that 'tis quite another Thing, what is in it ſelf *True* or *Falſe*, *Right* or *Wrong*, and

and what is to be a *Meaſure* or *Boundary* of *Chriſtian Communion*. Are we yet to Learn, that Chriſtian Communion is not amongſt Men that are perfect, but that are Labouring under manifold Imperfections, both in Knowledge and Holineſs! And whatſoever Miſtake in Judgment, or Obliquity in Practice, can conſiſt with *holding the Head*, ought to conſiſt alſo with being of the ſame Chriſtian Communion; not the ſame *Locally* which is impoſſible; but the ſame occaſionally, as any Providence invites at this or that Time; and Mentally, in Heart and Spirit, at all Times. And to ſuch Peace (and conſequently Communion) we are *all called in one Body*, Col. 3. 15. We are expreſly required to *receive one another* (which cannot but Mean into each others Communion) and *not to doubtful Diſputations*, Rom. 14. 1. If any be Thought to be Weak, and thereupon to Differ from us in ſome or other Sentiments, if the Difference conſiſts *with holding the Head*, they are not, becauſe they are Weak, to be Refuſed Communion, but Received; and Received, *becauſe the Lord has Received them*, Ver. 3. All that we ſhould think Chriſt has Received into his Communion, we ought to Receive into ours, *Rom.* 15. 7. Scriptures are ſo expreſs to this Purpoſe, that nothing can be more.

AND, indeed, to make New Boundaries of Chriſtian Communion, is to make a New Chriſtianity, and a *New Goſpel*, and New Rules of Chriſt's Kingdom; and, by which to diſtinguiſh Subjects and Rebels, and in Effect to Dethrone Him, to Rival Him in His higheſt Prerogative, *viz.* The Eſtabliſhing the Terms of Life and Death, for Men Living under his Goſpel. It is to Confine Salvation, in the Means of it, to ſuch or ſuch a Party, ſuch a Church; arbitrarily Diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of Chriſtians. As if the Priviledges of his Kingdom belong'd to a Party only; and that, for inſtance the Lords Table were to loſe its Name, and be no longer ſo called, but the Table of this or that Church, conſtituted by *Rules of their own Deviſing*. For if it be the Lords Table, they are to keep it Free, to be approach't upon the Lords Terms, and not their own. In the mean time, what higher Invaſion can there be of Chriſts Rights? And ſince the Chriſtian Church became ſo overwiſe, above what is Written in framing New Doctrines, and Rules of Worſhip, How miſerably it hath Languiſh't, and been Torn in Pieces, they cannot be ignorant who have read any Thing of the Hiſtory of it.

AND

AND indeed there is not a Difference to be found, amongſt them *that hold the Head*, but muſt be ſo Minute, that it cannot be a Pretence for Refuſing Communion. For true Chriſtian Charity will at leaſt Reſolve it into Weakneſs. And Men are generally ſo kind to themſelves, that he from whom another differs, will be very apt to think himſelf the ſtronger; then does the Rule conclude him, *You that are Strong, bear the Infirmities of the Weak*, and do not Diſpute with them, but Receive them. This Obligation immediately lies *on the Strong*, and therefore muſt take hold of them that think themſelves ſo, not to Diſpute with the others but receive them, and *becauſe the Lord has Received them.* Does He take them into his Communion, and will not You take them into Yours? To profeſs want of Charity in Excuſe, is to Excuſe a Fault by a Wickedneſs. It is to Uſurp Chriſts Judgment-Seat, and Invade His Office, *Rom.* 14. 4, 10. Therefore whereſoever there is any ſuch Caſe to be found, that let a Man be never ſo ſound in the Faith, never ſo Orthodox, let him be in all Things elſe never ſo Regular through his whole Converſation, if he do not ſubmit to ſome doubtful Thing, Thought perhaps a Matter of indifferency on the one ſide, and unlawful on the other; this Perſon muſt be excluded Chriſtian Communion, for no other known Pretence, but only that he *preſumed to Doubt* ſomewhat in the impoſed Terms; for *this very Doubt* he is to be Treated as an *Heathen* or *Publican*, or indeed no more to be Received into our Communion, than a Dog or a Swine. How will this be Juſtified at Chriſt's Tribunal!

BUT how much leſs juſtifiable is it, if not only *Communion be Refuſed*, but *Ruine Deſigned*, to ſuch as Differ from us about thoſe our Arbitrary Additions to Chriſts Rules, and Boundaries of Chriſtian Communion.

AND ſcarce can a very ſerious Perſon (even in ſo ſerious a Matter) forbear to Smile, when they ſee them that have done ſo much harm to their *Fellow-Chriſtians*, attempt to juſtifie it, only in Effect from their having Power to do it; which would as well juſtifie any Thing, ſince no Man does what he could not do.

NOR yet do I look upon this Proneneſs, to innovate and deviſe other Terms of Chriſtian Communion than Chriſt hath Himſelf appointed, *as the Peculiar Character of a Party:* But as a *Symptom* of the diſeaſed State of the Chriſtian Church, too plain-

plainly appearing in all Parties. As I alſo reckon it too low and narrow a Deſign, to aim at a *Oneneſs of Communion* among Chriſtians of this and that ſingle *Party* and *Perſwaſion*; which would but make ſo much the Larger *Clous*, and *Tumor* a greater unnatural *Apoſtem* or *Seceſſion*, in the Sacred Body of our Bleſſed Lord. Nothing in this Kind, can be a Deſign worthy of a Chriſtian, or ſuitable to the Spirit of Chriſt, but to have *Chriſtian Communion Extended and Limitted*, according to the *extent*, and *Limits* of *viſibly Serious and vital Chriſtianity*. And hereof, that diſtinguiſhing Judgment, which is neceſſary, is as little difficult as in *Private Converſation* between a *Viſible Friend*, and a *Viſible Enemy*, or *in Publick* and Political, between a *Viſible Subject*, and a *Viſible Rebel*. So far as a Diſcrimination can and according to Chriſts Rules (not our own unbounded Fancies) ought to be made, any ſerious *Living Chriſtian*, of whatſoever Party or Denomination; I ought to communicate with *as ſuch, and with only ſuch*. For *Living Chriſtians* to *ſever* from one another, or to mingle with the Dead, is an equal Tranſgreſſion. Nor muſt our Judgment of any ſuch Caſe, be guided by meer Charity, but muſt guide it, being it ſelf guided by the known Laws of Chriſt.

TO Summ up all, when once we ſhall have Learned to diſtinguiſh between the *Eſſentials* of Chriſtianity, and *accidental Appendages*, And between Accidents of Chriſt's appointing, and of our Deviſing, and to dread affixing of our own Devices to ſo Sacred an Inſtitution. Much more when every Truth or Duty contained in the Bible, cannot be counted Eſſential or Neceſſary, when we ſhall have learnt not only not to add Inventions of our own to that Sacred Frame, but much more not to preſume to inſert them into the Order of *Eſſentials* or *Neceſſaries*, and Treat Men as no Chriſtians, for wanting them. When the Goſpel ſhall have its Liberty to the utmoſt Ends of the Earth. When the Regenerating Spirit ſhall go forth with it, and propagate a Divine and GOD like Nature every where among Men. When Regeneration ſhall be underſtood to ſignifie the communicating of ſuch a Nature, and ſuch Diſpoſitions to Men. When the weight of ſuch Words comes to be apprehended [*He that hateth his Brother, abideth in Death*, 1 John 2.] When to be Born of GOD ceaſes to ſignifie with us, being Proſelyted to this or that Church formed and diſtinguiſhed by Humane Device. When Religious Pretences

Ceaſe.

Ceaſe to ſerve Political Purpoſes, when the Intereſt of a Party ceaſes to weigh more with us than the whole Chriſtian Intereſt. When Sincerity ſhall be Thought the nobleſt Embelliſhment of a Chriſtian, *When the Wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall Lie down with the Kid: And the Calf, and the Young Lion and the Fatling together, and a little Child ſhall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear ſhall feed, their Young Ones ſhall lie down together: And the Lion ſhall Eat ſtraw like the Ox. And the Sucking Child ſhall Play on the hole of the Aſp, and the Weaned Child ſhall put his Hand on the Cockatrice-Den. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my Holy Mountain: For the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*, Iſa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Then will our Peace be as a River, and our Righteouſneſs as the Waves of the Sea.* Iſa. 48. 18. And *the Glorious Lord will Himſelf be to us a Place of broad Waters*, Ch. 33. 21. Where Straits, and Rocks, and Shelves, ſhall no more Affright or Endanger us. But if theſe Things take no Place with us, then have we Cauſe to apprehend that the Things of our Peace are yet hid from our Eyes.

FINIS.

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